

TAKING STOCK ON THE EVE OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Carmen Jacobs, National Business Center

Interior's 150th anniversary is a time of education, employee recognition, and celebration. Coming on the eve of the new millennium, it is also a time to reflect on the critical role the Department has played in protecting America's environment and heritage and to consider our responsibilities for the 21st century. As **Secretary Babbitt's** senior policy advisor, **John Berry** offers Interior's employees and customers a unique perspective on Interior's efforts and responsibilities.

"Time and again, in surveys of our customers, we have rated at or near the top in the categories of public support and quality of product provided," Berry pointed out. "However, we need to zero in on the 10 percent where we need to improve, to identify where we can do better."

Joining the Department in November 1997 as assistant secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Berry wasted no time "zeroing in" on three areas for immediate improvement: the quality of work life, workforce diversity, and accountability. "In the time I've been here, I've tried to organize our efforts around these three themes, to focus the message for all employees," Berry explained.

On Quality of Life: "Federal employees want to do good—that's why they got into this line of work," Berry said. "They want to serve their community and their country in a unique way. This is a highly motivated workforce. We just need to give employees the opportunity to run with their good ideas."

Working from this philosophy, Berry has initiated management-union partnerships and managed resources to accomplish a number of quality of work life improvements for Interior's employees. The headquarters building, in particular, has seen significant upgrades in facilities and services, including re-opening the health unit, renovating the fitness center, cafeteria, and snack bar, upgrading the Family Support Center, and improving security.

"The work we've done here at headquarters is only phase one of a three-phase plan to improve the quality of employees' experiences with the Department," Berry explained. Phase II involves expanding these quality of work life initiatives to the field, an effort that he formally began in December, 1998. "I will stay on this issue with the Interior Management Council to see that this gets done and carried out to the field," Berry vowed. Phase III involves applying the same type of philosophy and energy to our customers, to enhance their experiences with Interior.

On Diversity: "It's important that as an organization we don't just talk diversity—we must seek diversity," Berry warned. "Unless we create a positive, welcoming, accepting place for diversity, we will not be able to recruit the best skills for the year 2010 or 2020." He believes the Department's current efforts to expand diversity are a good start. "At present, we are making progress in every bureau. On the issues of race and gender, we have done pretty well, though we're still not making strides at the rate we need to in order to be ready for 2010. We also need to focus more on recruiting and retaining individuals with disabilities."

"I'm interested in recruiting and retaining candidates who have energy, vision, and commitment," Berry continued. "In America, you ought to be judged by how well you can do the job, not by any other factors—not by how old you are, who you pray to, who you sleep with, or the color of your skin."

The Department undertook a number of specific initiatives to foster diversity, Berry said. He meets quarterly with bureau directors to review efforts to create a Department that reflects America's diverse population. In this way, he hopes to create a "brain

RENEWAL & REDEDICATION



Assistant Secretary John Berry, above, addresses employee concerns at a Town Hall Meeting. Below left, E. Melodee Stith, director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, oversees Interior's efforts to combat discrimination, sexual harassment, and other violations of equal opportunity employment laws. Below right, Dolores Chacon, associate director of the Office of Personnel Policy, describes Interior efforts to improve workforce diversity, accountability, and the quality of work life. Photos by Tami Heilemann, NBC



in programmatic money. This is the purpose of PAR, the Partnership for America's Resources."

"With PAR, we have energized a community—governors, mayors, environmental committees," Berry said. PAR is the Department's initiative to protect natural resources by using some of the \$900 million a year in royalties generated by Outer Continental Shelf oil and natural gas development. Those revenues are deposited into the Land and Water Conservation Fund, from which money is appropriated for acquiring and conserving land to preserve endangered habitat and species.

Interior's PAR proposal was incorporated into the President's Lands Legacy Initiative for fiscal year 2000. Overall, the Administration is proposing \$1.3 billion for the protection of public lands and open space. The President's budget calls for Interior to receive an \$840 million increase over fiscal year 1999. That would amount to the largest annual increase in Interior's 150-year history. "Even if PAR doesn't make it into the final fiscal year 2000 budget," Berry explained, "it will survive to see another day in some form."

But with greater budget resources comes greater accountability for the dollars the Department is given by Congress to carry out its mission. Berry is sensitive to Congress' oversight and, therefore, has managed the Interior's resources from a common sense perspective. He initiated the merger of the Department's three administrative service centers, for example, to eliminate overlapping functions, standardize administrative processes, and improve customer service—all to the delight of Congress.

Moreover, he instituted a five-year comprehensive planning strategy for bureaus to use in prioritizing their activities and demonstrating to Congress and the taxpayers what is getting done and why. Category 1 priorities includes activities that involve the "life, health, and safety" of employees or visitors to Interior sites or managed lands. Category 2 involves cultural and natural resources that are on the verge of degradation. Category 3 consists of ongoing projects—those the organization needs to complete before starting something new.

Berry believes our foremost accountability is to succeeding generations of Americans. "The early Greeks and our first Americans shared the philosophy that we should leave this world better than we found it," he said. "In that spirit, we need to work to leave our country, our lands, our environment in a better state for the next generation in the next century. As we close out this century so nobly begun and begin a new millennium, we need to rededicate ourselves to be forceful, passionate advocates for our natural resources, our environment, our wildlife, and the Native Americans."



Above, Mari R. Barr, center, presents exemplary partnership awards in support of historically black colleges and universities' Safety of Dams Training Program. In center photo, Assistant Secretary John Berry holds a labor management agreement for the NPS' North East Region. At left is Joseph Codispoti, president of AFGE Local 342, and at right, Diane Dayson, NPS. In photo at right, Tim Vigotsky, NBC director, thanks a student from Stevens Elementary for its Christmas card to Interior.

BERRY MAKES EMPLOYEES WORK LIFE CONCERNS A POLICY ISSUE

Carmen Jacobs, National Business Center

Within moments of meeting him, you can sense a passion and commitment. He obviously cares deeply about employees. There also is sense of urgency in his voice as he speaks of ways to improve the quality of Interior's work life.

"I firmly believe that if our employees are committed to the mission and believe their efforts are recognized and valued, they will convey their enthusiasm for their jobs in the way they perform their work," he declares with a sincerity unique to managers in positions such as his. "And the American people will receive better and friendlier service."

In addition to fulfilling his responsibilities as the Department's assistant secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, **John Berry** is also championing quality of work life initiatives on behalf of Interior's 66,000 employees. Berry has worked tirelessly to upgrade the facilities of the Main Interior Building in Washington, DC, improve services to employees, and generally help them to better balance their home and work responsibilities. "We need to let employees know that we respect them and care about their experiences here," Berry said. "I want employees to say, 'I like working here. I would want my children to work in a place like this.'"

Shortly after his arrival, Berry conducted town hall meetings with employees of the Main Interior Complex to elicit concerns about the quality of work life. Employees shared their thoughts and complaints about such issues as the age of Interior's headquarters, the quality of air circulating through the building, the closing of the health unit, limited parking, the condition of the fitness facilities, and the quality of the food service in the cafeteria.

In response, Berry quickly convened a Quality of Work Life Task Force to begin tackling these concerns. Joining Berry in developing the overall plan for improving the quality of employees' work lives are **Mari Barr**, the deputy assistant secretary for Human Resources, **Tim Vigotsky**, director of the National Business Center, and **Leonard Stull**, the local representative of the National Federation of Federal Employees on Interior's Partnership Council.

Headquarter's Improvements: In the year since the first town hall meeting, employees have witnessed numerous upgrades to the headquarter's building and improvements in services. The initiatives included upgrading the roof terrace for employees to use, renovating the North Penthouse for meetings and conferences, providing the Family Support Center with local area network capabilities, installing two new chillers to improve building ventilation, refurbishing the fitness center and installing new state-of-the-art exercise equipment, and enhancing the basement with new paint, photographic displays, improved vendor counters, and a commissioned wall mural.

Significant enhancements also were made to the security system, including an increase in exterior cameras at major entrances, new x-ray machines and metal detectors, as well as parking gates at the South Interior Building.

The most notable improvement, however, was the re-opening of the Health Unit in July, 1998. In the first six months of operation, the Health Unit attended to more than 1,000 employees and administered hundreds of health evaluations, immunizations, and referrals for additional care. The nurse, **Michael Rorie**, on contract with the Public Health Service, even assisted in saving two lives and helped with a birth. "It's the best \$100,000 we've ever spent," said Berry.

In addition, the Department entered a partnership with the General Services Administration to restore precious historic Native American mural artwork in the Main Interior Building's South Penthouse, renovate the employee snack bar, and upgrade the cafeteria. "Helping agencies improve the quality of life for federal employees is a part of GSA's current strategic and business plan," noted **Tom Catlin**, the GSA associate regional administrator working with Interior on the initiatives. "We know that by making improvements such as these, we can improve employee morale and productivity which benefits all of us: the customers, the Federal Government, and the taxpayers."

Tim Vigotsky, director of the National Business Center, and **Michael Cyr**, chief of the division of Facilities Management Services, have managed these improvements to the building. "It's been exciting to watch the transformation of the building, but it's been more exciting to witness the effect of these changes on the morale of the employees," said Vigotsky. "Literally hundreds of employees have called or sent e-mails just to say 'thank you for making this a safer, friendlier place to work.'"

Other quality of work life initiatives for employees in the Interior complex have include creating a weekly electronic calendar of events and enhancing the CPR Responders program. Berry also established a Patrons Council to work in partnership with the cafeteria contractor to improve the quality of food service, evaluate pricing, and work with GSA in the renovation of the cafeteria.

"The work we've done here at headquarters is only phase one of a three-phase plan to improve the quality of employees' experiences with the Department," Berry explained. "I began quality of work life improvements here because I wanted to prove we could make changes in our own building. I wanted to lead by example, to demonstrate a team approach by entering partnerships with employees to tackle these problems."

Around the Nation: The second phase of Berry's overall strategy involves challenging each bureau and office to develop quality of work life plans for Interior employees throughout the United States and to work in partnership with those employees to carry out the plans. "The employees all across the nation are our bread and butter. We could not accomplish the mission without them," Berry said, emphasizing the importance of initiating this second phase.

Phase II challenges each bureau to oversee its improvement efforts, including the appointment of a senior official to head the bureau effort.

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New Acting Deputy

David J. Hayes, a counselor to the Secretary who has concluded several tough environmental negotiations for the Department, was named Acting Deputy Secretary of Interior. He will continue his counselor responsibilities while serving as second in command for supervising and administering the Department's bureaus and offices. Hayes, 45, a prominent environmental attorney who joined the Office of the Secretary in March 1997, helped close the controversial Headwaters Forest negotiations in March, enabling the Federal Government to acquire the world's largest remaining stand of old-growth redwoods still in private ownership. The \$380 million transaction, which culminated four years of effort and saved an initiative that was in jeopardy, will purchase 7,500 acres of redwoods in Humboldt County, California, from Pacific Lumber Co. Secretary Babbitt commended Hayes, saying "his negotiations and decisive management skills have been exceptional in addressing a large number of difficult issues facing the Department." Before coming to Interior, Hayes, who has practiced environmental and natural resource law for 20 years, headed the environmental department of the Washington, DC, law firm of Latham & Watkins. He previously served as chairman of the Environmental Law Institute.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE CONTACTS

Assistant Secretary Berry wants each employee to share ideas for improvements in the quality of work life. Employees are encouraged to contact their local union officer or steward to learn how they can put forward ideas for improvement. If no exclusive recognition exists, employees should contact their supervisor or the Quality of Work Life Executive for their bureau. These executives are identified below with their telephone number, e-mail address, and photo, so that employees can contact them directly.

Carmen Maymi
Bureau of Reclamation
(202) 208-3565
cmaymi@usbr.gov



"Our employees' lives have been noticeably enhanced through the concrete quality-of-life initiatives enacted by Reclamation's energetic Work and Family Team. The scope of the team is expanding this year to ensure greater employee input while developing and marketing creative new ways to help workers balance work and family needs."



Robert Ewing
Office of Surface Mining
(202) 208-2546
rewing@osmre.gov

"Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Interior employees by upgrading the quality of their work life is an initiative that deserves the encouragement and full support of all managers and supervisors."



Robert More
Solicitors Office
(202) 208-6115
robert_more@ios.doi.gov

"We hope for some dramatic improvements in our employees' quality of work life over the coming year. We have convened a committee of representative headquarters and field employees to study Quality of Work Life issues within the Office of the Solicitor and to make recommendations for further improvements."

Mamie Parker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(202) 208-3843
mamie_parker@mail.fws.gov



"The leadership in the Fish and Wildlife Service is ready to make a difference!"

Bob Brown
Minerals Management Service
(202) 208-3220;
bob_brown@mms.gov



"We at the Minerals Management Service are proud of our accomplishments and ongoing activities to improve the quality of our employee's work life. Initiatives such as our employee fitness program are key to our commitment to TEAM MMS."



Barbara J. Ryan
U.S. Geological Survey
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"John Berry's Quality of Work Life Initiative has energized us to reopen the GS Ideas database -1 web-based forum where any employee can submit his/her thoughts and ideas for improving the U.S. Geological Survey."



Sue E. Mascia
National Park Service
(202) 208-6953
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"As the keepers of America's greatest natural, historical, and cultural treasures, the employees of the National Park Service earn and richly deserve the finest quality of work life we can provide."

Mari Barr
Office of the Secretary
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"In the Office of the Secretary, we are challenging our employees and managers to assist in reaching the highest level of good customer service coupled with quality work life."

Sharon Eller
Office of the Inspector General
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"The Office of the Inspector General is developing a quality of work life program as individual and valuable as our people. We believe that quality people in a quality environment will produce quality results."



James McDivitt
Bureau of Indian Affairs
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"Improving the quality of employee worklife can improve the efficiency and quality of service that we provide to those we serve."



Warren Johnson
Bureau of Land Management
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"Rich in pride, tradition, and achievement, it is only our human resources that keep us tethered to the ground, when we are prepared to fly high."





INITIATIVE TO CHANGE THE FACE OF INTERIOR

As the Department celebrates 150 years of service to America, it also marks the first anniversary of its Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity. A major Interior-wide initiative launched last year with a formal signing ceremony and kickoff event, the plan has already begun to change the Department's recruiting, hiring, and career advancement practices.

Backed by the strong, unified support of top management, the diversity initiative aims to improve the representation of women, minorities, and the disabled in all bureaus and offices at all levels. Early in his Administration, **President Clinton** said that he wanted to build a federal workforce that reflected the diverse citizenry of the country. **Secretary Babbitt** translated that vision and commitment into a Department-wide initiative to improve the diversity of Interior's workforce.

To ensure that the initiative was handled at the highest level, the Secretary designated **John Garamendi**, the former deputy secretary, to lead a task force of managers and employees from the bureaus and offices in developing the strategic plan. Secretary Babbitt also appointed **David Montoya** as the first deputy assistant secretary for Workforce Diversity to provide guidance and oversight in carrying out the initiative.

As a first step, the Secretary mandated that all non-career members of the Senior Executive Service and other political appointees receive diversity training, challenging them to build a workforce that reflected the ethnic diversity of the people Interior serves. Since that time, all career SES members have been required to take diversity training, which also was made available to other managers, supervisors, and employees. In addition, Diversity Training Conferences have been conducted in Atlanta, GA, and Shepherdstown, WV, for Interior professionals who handle equal opportunity, diversity, and other personnel issues.

The Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity also serves as a model for other federal agencies. Interior's Workforce Diversity Office receives many requests for the plan and other information on how the Department developed and carried out the strategy and received support from its executives, managers, supervisors, and employees.

The plan has five major goals—recruitment, retention, accountability, education, and development—and calls for zero tolerance of discrimination. Because the bureaus are unique, each developed a specific implementation plan that was signed by the bureau director. A systematic means for tracking progress was developed and **John Berry**, the assistant secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, evaluated each bureau's progress with its director at quarterly performance reviews and monthly meetings of the Interior Management Committee.

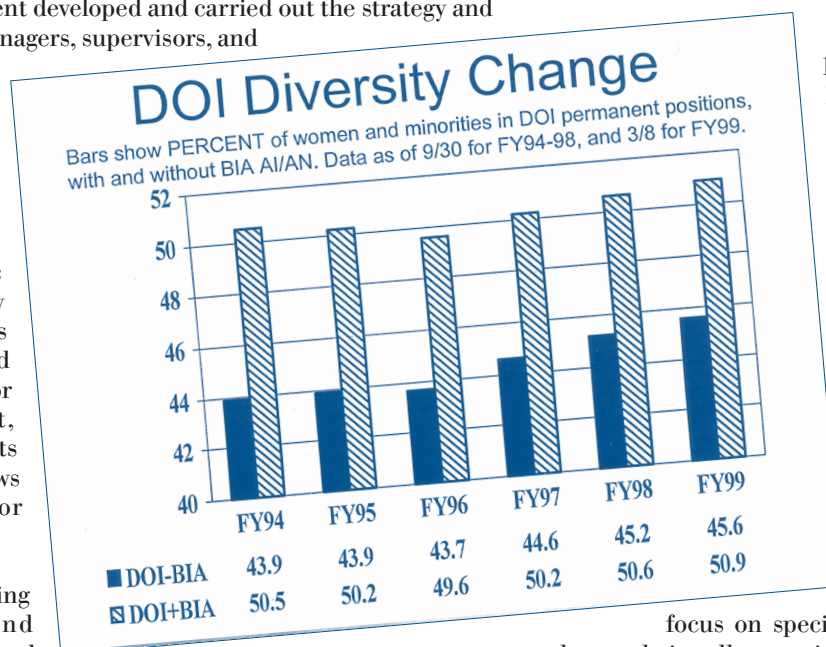
As a result of these efforts, progress is being made. The number of women and minorities employed by bureaus increased slightly in the first year. However, with the launching of new initiatives, an emphasis on targeted recruitment, and the adoption of a number of "best practices," larger improvements are expected in fiscal year 1999 and into the next century. There was a slight decline in the representation of employees with targeted disabilities and special emphasis will be placed on targeting recruitment toward this under-represented group.

In the first year, many "best practices" were developed and shared and bureaus reported numerous accomplishments. A "best practice" that received high acclaim is the Tri-Bureau Agreement signed under the assistant secretary for Lands and Minerals

Right, Assistant Secretary John Berry meets with bureau and office directors at a recent Quarterly Performance Review of the Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity. Below right, Tom Fry, the acting director of the Bureau of Land Management, makes a presentation on a BLM "best practice" to the bureau directors at a Quarterly Performance Review



Meeting. From left are David Montoya, the deputy assistant secretary for Workforce Diversity; John Berry, assistant secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget; Warren Johnson, BLM's assistant director for Human Resources Management; and Jeff Walker, of BLM's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity. Photos by Tami Heilemann, NBC



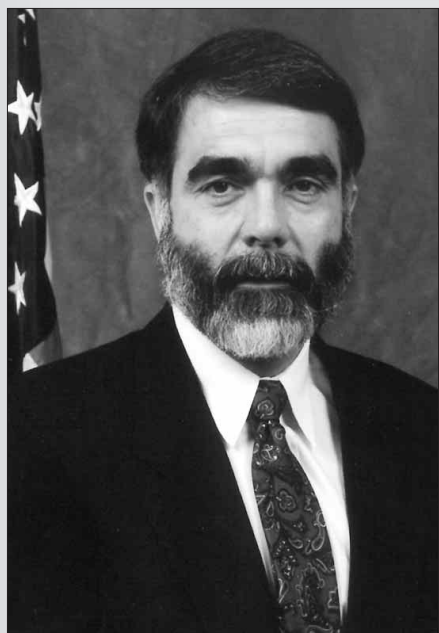
Management. In the past, the Bureau of Land Management, Minerals Management Service, and Office of Surface Mining agreed to coordinate their efforts to identify recruitment sources, share educational outreach efforts, provide mutual assistance in alternative dispute resolution services, and develop informational materials and exhibition displays.

The U.S. Geological Survey's Geologic Division established the Ethnic Minorities Advisory Committee to promote the equitable representation and career development of ethnic minorities, enhance sensitivity, increase cultural awareness, and strengthen the organization from within. The committee sponsored a contest which culminated with the unveiling of the winning mural, entitled *Diversity: Bringing Our Differences Together to Create a Better Workforce*, painted by artist and temporary USGS employee, **Dana S. Johnstone**. USGS established seven Bureau Recruitment Teams and trained them to

focus on specific schools to develop partnerships. Also, the teams will educate their colleagues in recruitment and outreach techniques.

As part of its recruitment efforts, the Bureau of Reclamation used funding and grants to stimulate the interest of minority students and faculty in career opportunities with the bureau. Reclamation has contributed funding to the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, NM, to develop a water technology curriculum that promotes water resource management skills for students and other tribal members. The bureau provided a grant to the non-profit Mathematics, Engineering and Science Association to help carry out its New Mexico and Arizona Project Partnership Program that focuses on providing early opportunities in federal careers for under-represented populations.

LESKY'S EFFORTS LAUDED AT CEREMONY



John D. Lesky
Solicitor

John D. Lesky, the Solicitor (General Counsel) of the Department, was commended by Secretary Babbitt at the March 4 Awards Convocation as a vital member of the Office of the Secretary's team that has launched and successfully defended Interior's environmental restoration initiatives. Lesky heads a staff of 260 lawyers who provide legal services and advice to bureaus and agencies. He has written several books on natural resources law and policy and litigated numerous environmental cases in state and federal courts. Lesky, who led the Clinton-Gore Transition Team for Interior, served as special counsel to Chairman George Miller of the House Committee on Natural Resources and was the associate solicitor for Energy and Resources in the Carter Administration. He also spent five years with the western office of the Natural Resource Defense Council. Lesky is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

And Reclamation has awarded a grant to the Southern Nevada Hispanic Employment Council's scholarship program for college students. The bureau also has signed an agreement with Langston University, an historically black university in Oklahoma, to develop a Water Resources Management curriculum for undergraduates at Langston.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is part of a joint venture with the National Park Service, BLM, and Oklahoma State University to assist Langston University with the expansion of its natural resources curriculum. The university is a recruitment source for the three bureaus. Director **Jamie Rappaport Clark** and her top officials signed a Directorate Charter on Diversity in which they agreed to be accountable and hold all managers accountable to help the Service increase workforce diversity. The Service also began a centralized applicant background tracking system to use with advertised positions. The database will help to analyze the effectiveness of outreach efforts in achieving a diverse applicant pool and the number of selection opportunities.

In response to one of President Clinton's commitments at the Summit on America's Future, the National Park Service activated the Public Land Corporation and expanded its youth services opportunities to carry out needed repair and restoration projects in our national parks. Through partnerships with non-profit youth-serving organizations, the program provides opportunities to 1,025 youngsters from diverse backgrounds for environmental education, mentoring, counseling, and career development. The program also accomplishes needed work in the parks.

According to its most recent report, the National Park Service has hired 422 youth under this program. Minorities received 46 percent and white women received 22.5 percent of these positions. Also, NPS pledged to increase the number of women and minorities in its summer seasonal employment program and was able to show a significant increase from its 1997 baseline program. This is an important accomplishment, because this is frequently a feeder group for new hires.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Trust Responsibilities administers initiatives designed to improve American Indian and Alaskan Native representation in technical and professional mission-oriented natural resources programs. Under a partnership with a cooperative education program, located on Haskell Indian Nations University, the office has successfully employed students in natural resources disciplines. Nineteen undergraduate and graduate students are now employed at duty stations in 10 states, most as foresters in bureau and tribal organizations.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs requested and received commitments from other bureaus to fund cooperative education positions to improve the representation of American Indians and Native Alaskans in natural resource fields at Interior. The bureau also has partnerships with other agencies in the Native American Water Resources and Surveying Engineering Technician Training Program. Last year, 50 graduates completed the program. Three are permanent bureau employees and the remaining graduates were placed in tribal organizations.

WORK LIFE CONCERNS A POLICY ISSUE

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At Berry's request, bureaus and offices have prepared a preliminary report on past efforts and developed a plan for future improvements. Deputy Assistant Secretary Mari Barr explained that the plans will become part of a "best practices" reference document so that managers and supervisors do not waste time reinventing the wheel on these quality of work life initiatives. The bureaus also will set up electronic bulletin boards and/or web sites/chat lines to allow employees to share ideas and make suggestions.

"There are some exciting initiatives already being carried out in the field," said Barr. "A prime example is the Bureau of Reclamation's Worklife Planning Committee. The group is really forward-thinking and has researched and put into practice a number of ideas that other bureaus and offices could also use."

Barr urges Interior managers and supervisors to act now on these initiatives. "Quality of work life initiatives are about getting the employees to feel involved and valued. The first step to improving the quality of work life for employees is by talking with them." Stull shares this sentiment. "I want to encourage field managers to involve their employee representatives the way John Berry has involved me and others at central headquarters," he said.

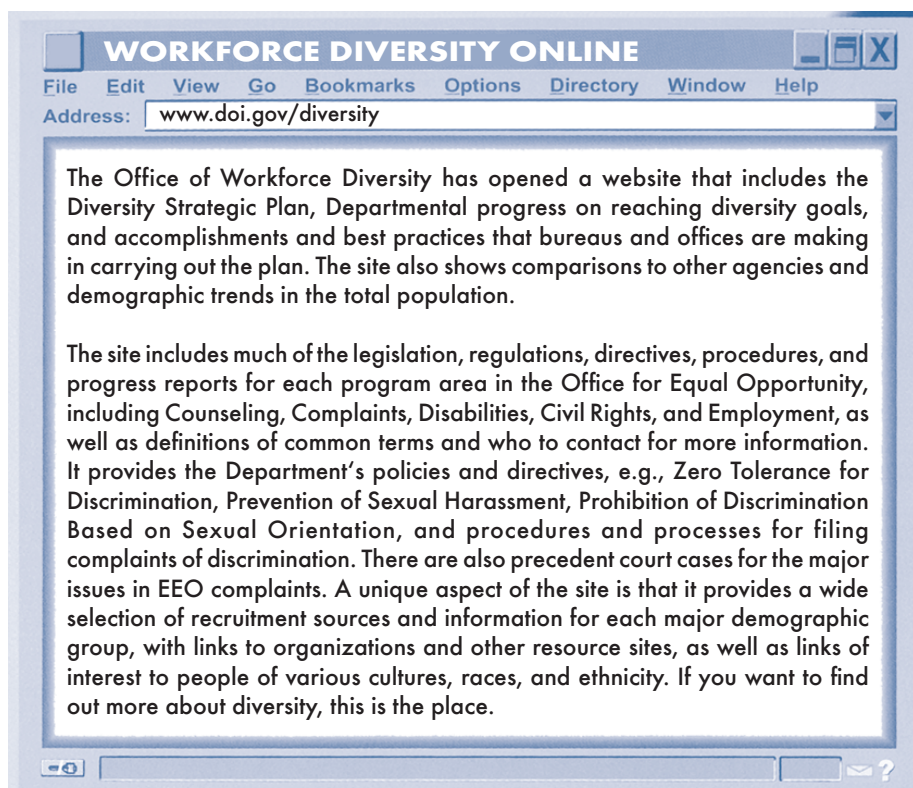
Future Plans: While much has been accomplished at headquarters and in regional and local offices, the Department needs to place a greater focus on future initiatives, Berry stressed. "What we've done in the past is good, but we need to increase our efforts by a power of 10 and take it to the next level."

Barr agreed. "Much of what we're working on right now is in the embryonic stage," she said. "There are so many initiatives we need to evaluate and put into practice to benefit the business and the employees, but also to make us competitive with the private sector and other forward-thinking federal agencies. The workforce is shrinking and to recruit and retain the best employees, we must focus on the quality of work life."

Future initiatives include: accelerating the use of alternate dispute resolution methods and techniques, expanding telecommuting and alternate work schedules, investigating transit subsidies, improving employee orientation, expanding our partnerships with the unions, enhancing employee recognition, and using technology more effectively through chat rooms, video conferencing, and the development of informational web sites, such as *Personnel Manager*.

Greater attention also will be given to initiatives that, as Barr suggested, "help people to develop themselves." These include the DOI University, Executive Development Institute, Team Leadership Program, and mentoring. Lastly, the Department will continue to work closely with GSA to secure funding for modernization of the historic Main Interior Building.

What about the final phase of John Berry's plan for quality of work life initiatives at the Department? "The third phase of the strategy is to apply this same energy to our customers," he explained. "We need to begin asking ourselves how we can improve the quality of experiences for them."



"Quality of work life initiatives require a mind shift, a culture change within the Department," Barr said in summing up her thoughts on the strategy. "We need to get beyond the mentality of 'we've always done it this way.'" And, indeed no one manifests this approach better than John Berry, who has proven time and again that he is serious about challenging the status quo and improving the work lives of the Department's employees. As he so clearly and passionately pointed out, "With little money but strong intentions, we can accomplish a lot."